



Stillwater Conservation District

Protecting Montana's Natural Resources in Stillwater County

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STILLWATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT MEETING MINUTES

August 4, 2026 | 6:00 PM

Location: USDA Service Center Conference Room, 334 N. 9th Street, Columbus, MT

Meeting called to order by: **Bob Van Oosten**, Chairman, at approximately 6:00 PM.

Supervisors Present: **Bob Van Oosten** (Chairman), **Noel Keogh** (Vice Chairman), **Butch Behrent** (Treasurer), **Lynda Grande** (Supervisor), **Darryl Thompson** (Associate Member).

Supervisors Absent: **Steve Story** (Secretary).

Others Present: Sharon Flemetis (District Administrator), Garrett Larson (NRCS), Bowman Davis (WWC Engineering — by phone), Judi Powers, Lincoln Powers.

Approved Absent: 2 vacant seats.

Conflict of Interest Disclosure

No conflicts of interest were disclosed by any board member.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment was offered. (Public participation regarding violations #25-006CV and #25-014CV is recorded under Complaints / Violations below.)

REPORTS

Bob Van Oosten: No County Planning Board meeting was held this cycle (canceled — no business). Nothing further to report.

Butch Behrent: Noted the Stillwater Valley Watershed Council festivities Thursday evening and the flotilla being organized for Sunday. Nothing further to report.

Noel Keogh: Announced the First Annual Tom Kirchner Memorial river float and weed pull on the upper Stillwater, Sunday at 9:00 AM from the fire hall (lunch provided by Stillwater Mining Company); rowers and boats needed.

Lynda Grande: Attended the Watershed Council's post-flood float tour and advocated for the agricultural landowner perspective on riprap and streambank protection; noted the number of homes now along the river.

Steve Story: Absent — no report.

Darryl Thompson: No report.

Garrett Larson (NRCS): All current-year funding has been converted to contracts and wrapped up. Staff are conducting range inventories toward next year's grazing systems, carrying capacities, and water-development strategies, and taking signups for next year's funding. This year funded roughly 13–14 conservation-practice applications, about 40 tree / fuel-mitigation applications, two grazing projects, and one precision-agriculture cropland project. The office is down two staff, slowing range-inventory work amid drought conditions.

Sharon Flemetis: Report incorporated into Financial Reports below. Also introduced David Kopilow, a DNRC Urban & Community Forestry contact relocating to Columbus, who wishes to build a working relationship with the District (technical assistance, tree identification, data collection, grant writing, and education) and plans to attend a future meeting.

UNAPPROVED MINUTES

Motion to approve the **July 14, 2026 Permissive Medical Levy** minutes as presented.

Motion: **Lynda Grande** Seconded: **Butch Behrent** Discussion: **None** Vote: **Carried**

Motion to approve the **July 14, 2026 Regular Board Meeting** minutes as presented.

Motion: **Lynda Grande** Seconded: **Butch Behrent** Discussion: **None** Vote: **Carried**

FINANCIAL REPORTS

The District Administrator presented the financial reports: the profit-and-loss statement for the new fiscal year (minimal first-month activity), the Yellowstone Bank online statement showing current account balances (three accounts now reporting monthly), and the balance sheet. The Board also reviewed the FY2026 year-end final profit-and-loss, which reflected a substantial net loss for the year, and noted approximately \$69,000 in outstanding legal accounts payable.

Financial Report — Motion: **Noel Keogh** **Seconded:** **Lynda Grande** **Discussion:** As presented above. **Vote:** **Carried**

Monthly Warrants: The warrants since the July 14, 2026 meeting were presented as three electronic/direct payments (accounting-software debit account, payroll and taxes account, and insurance and federal taxes account); no paper checks were issued.

Motion: **Noel Keogh** Seconded: **Butch Behrent** Discussion: **None** Vote: **Carried**

NEW BUSINESS

Revised Proposed FY2027 Budget: The Board reviewed and revised the proposed FY2027 budget in detail, increasing multiple line items to reflect prior-year actuals and current costs — including the Administrator returning to full-time hours, increased health and liability insurance premiums, board and staff travel and training, secure records storage, and outreach-trailer branding. The revision brings total budgeted expense to approximately \$182,249.86 (an increase of about \$39,757 over the preliminary budget) and supports an amended CDA administrative-grant request. A separate written justification of each change was prepared.

Motion to approve the latest revision of the FY2027 budget.

Motion: Noel Keogh **Seconded:** Butch Behrent **Discussion:** As presented above **Vote:** Carried

GRANTS

USFS Agreement #23-GN-1101100-040 (Armstrong Creek): Update — the cutoff for outside-vendor expenses is August 15, 2026; no further expenses will be billed to the District after that date. The District is working to complete all closeout, financial, progress, monitoring, and performance reports. (Termination was authorized at the July 14 meeting.)

2026–2027 CDA (Administrative Grant): Motion to amend the CDA grant application based on the revised FY2027 budget.

Motion: Lynda Grande **Seconded:** Noel Keogh **Discussion:** None **Vote:** Carried

OLD BUSINESS

No old business items outside of the 310 matters and violations below.

310 APPLICATIONS AND COMPLAINTS

The District Administrator presented the following 310 permit applications. All motions, seconds, and votes are noted in the table below.

Appl. #	Name	Stream	Project	Received	Motion	Seconded	Vote
26-011	McCallum	W. Rosebud Creek	Bank stabilization / flow deflection	Rec'd 6/2; Tabled 6/9	Noel Keogh	Lynda Grande	Carried — DENIED
26-018	Gallatin Wireless Internet	Valley Creek	Utilities — fiber-optic boring	7/28/26	Bob Van Oosten	Butch Behrent	Carried — Approved as engineered

Notes on 310 Actions:

26-011 — McCallum (W. Rosebud Creek): DENIED, Tabled since June at the applicant's request pending re-engineering near the fishtail bridge area. FWP (Bryan Giordano) raised concerns regarding filling undercut banks and a channel diversion, and Floodplain required the work be engineered. The application remained incomplete (five items requested by the Administrator on June 1) with no further response, and the review window has lapsed. If the applicant wishes to proceed, a revised application must be resubmitted (to return as 26-011R1).

26-018 — Gallatin Wireless Internet (Valley Creek): APPROVED as engineered. Fiber-optic line to be bored beneath Valley Creek near the interstate (north side of the north frontage road) at 10-ft depth using 1" HDPE duct. The applicant confirmed property-owner permission. FWP (Bryan Giordano) reviewed the application and did not request a site visit.

COMPLAINTS / VIOLATIONS

#23-052V & #23-065V — Krone: District counsel granted opposing counsel a 30-day extension. No further Board action at this time.

#25-006CV & #25-014CV — Lincoln Powers: Engineer Bowman Davis (WWC Engineering) provided an update. For #25-014CV (berm placed in East Rosebud Creek about 1,200 ft south of the road), a joint 310 application and preliminary design to remove the berm and restore the original channel is in internal review and expected within the week. For #25-006CV (berms/ponds on a spring-fed side channel of East Rosebud Creek, west of the main channel), the engineer will submit a joint application and preliminary design by the August 14 deadline, with stamped plans to follow. Consistent with the original violation letters and FWP's site comments, the Board's direction is removal of the berms and restoration of original conditions, with material pulled from the floodplain. The Board recommended the engineer coordinate with Floodplain, the Army Corps, and FWP before finalizing the design. A site visit is anticipated before the September 1 meeting.

SAVE THE DATE

Sept 1, 2026 Board Meeting

Oct 6, 2026 Board Meeting

Nov 3, 2026 Board Meeting

Dec 1, 2026 Board Meeting

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn: Lynda Grande **Seconded:** Butch Behrent **Meeting adjourned at approximately 9:00 PM.**

This meeting is recorded for minute preparation and internal use only. Recordings are not retained under SCD policy. 310 Applications must be received by 12pm seven days prior to the meeting or otherwise approved to come in late and have been inspected to be reviewed. Agenda items must be submitted to the CD Office by Noon the Monday before the scheduled meeting. Agendas are available at the CD Office upon request and at stillwatercd.org once finalized. All meetings of the CD are open to the public. Once approved the minutes will be available at stillwatercd.org and the County Clerk and Records Office.

All Meetings with SCD will be recorded and the recording is a tool to help the SCDBS or SCDA with the creation of meeting minutes, only. Audio recordings of any meeting with the SCD will be retained until after the minutes of that particular meeting have been adopted by the SCD Board. This will allow space for future audio recording.

Minutes respectfully submitted by: Sharon Fletmetis

Minutes Approved on 9/1/26

Signed by Bob Van Oosten

